

Capital Asset Realignment For Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission Charter

- A. **OFFICIAL DESIGNATION** : Department of Veterans Affairs Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission
- B. **OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY** : The Commission will provide objectivity, bring an external perspective to the CARES planning process, and make specific recommendations to the Secretary regarding the realignment and allocation of capital assets necessary to meet the demand for veterans health care services over the next 20 years. In making its recommendations, the Commission will focus on the accessibility and cost effectiveness of care to be provided, while ensuring that the integrity of VA's health care and related missions is maintained, and any adverse impact on VA staff and affected communities is minimized.
- C. **PERIOD OF TIME NECESSARY FOR THE COMMISSION TO CARRY OUT ITS PURPOSE(S)** : The Commission shall complete its assigned responsibilities not later than February 29, 2004, unless that date is extended by the Secretary.
- D. **OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE COMMISSION REPORTS** : The Commission shall report to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- E. **OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO THE COMMISSION** : Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Department shall provide the Commission with such resources as may be necessary for the performance of its duties and functions. Upon request of the Secretary, the head of any Federal department or agency, where legally authorized, may detail, on a non-reimbursable basis, any personnel of the department or agency to the Commission to assist in performing its functions.

- F. DUTIES FOR WHICH THE COMMISSION IS RESPONSIBLE :** The Commission will consider recommendations submitted by the Under Secretary for Health designed to meet the objectives cited above, along with data and analysis in support of such recommendations. The Commission will also consider views and concerns expressed in writing during a 60-day period after the Under Secretary for Health makes his recommendations, or in public hearings held by the Commission, from individual veterans, veterans service organizations, Congress, medical school affiliates, VA employees, local government entities, affected community groups and other interested parties. The Commission may accept, modify, or reject with supporting comments, the recommendations received from the Under Secretary for Health.

Commission members shall be appointed by the Secretary and shall serve as objective advisors to the Secretary, not as representatives of any organizations they may otherwise be serving. The staff director of the Commission, appointed by the Secretary, is assigned the responsibilities of the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Commission.

- G. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS IN DOLLARS AND STAFF-YEARS :** The estimated cost of operating the Commission is \$2.3 million and 6 staff-years.
- H. ESTIMATED NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS :** The Commission is expected to hold 30-40 meetings, to include public hearings across the nation. A Federal government official shall be present at all meetings. All meetings of the Commission shall be held in conformance with the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.
- I. COMMITTEE TERMINATION DATE :** The Commission is authorized through February 29, 2004, unless extended by the Secretary.
- J. DATE CHARTER IS FILED :**

APPROVED :

Signed by Anthony J. Principi

Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Date: 12-22-03